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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio Stations, Monday, October 15, 1934.

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Hello Folks: Last week in my Garden Calendar, I talked about gathering nuts and sending samples of any especially fine walnuts, butternuts or hickorynuts to the Department of Agriculture for examination in the hope of finding superior strains of wild nuts that are worth propagating.

This morning, I want to remind you that the scientific workers of the Department of Agriculture and the State colleges, also the seedsmen and nurserymen, are constantly working for better varieties that are suitable for growing in different localities, and special strains of the various varieties. The success that has attended this improvement work has been truly remarkable.

Not so many years ago it was found that double-crossed hybrid seed corn would give better yields than the straight stock so seed-corn growers began to grow and sell hybrid seed corn. This has been done in the case of our sweet corn especially the Golden Bantam with the result that the double-crossed hybrid seed gives a higher yield and larger ears. But, if any of you folks who have grown this hybrid Golden Bantam corn this year, have saved your own supply of seed you are in for a disappointment if you plant that seed next year. The point is, the seed that is saved from the crop grown from the double hybrid seed doesn't come true and it breaks up more or less and the crop that is grown from it is liable to be very irregular. Some growers have reported that the second generation seed was satisfactory and as good as the original double-crossed seed which is considerably more expensive than ordinary seed corn or home-grown second generation seed but in tests the second-generation seed yields decreased from 5 to 25 percent - an average of more than 15 percent. The greater the yield of the double-crossed strain the greater was the decrease in the yield where the second generation seed was used. I am just passing this on to you as a sort of warning of what you gardeners may expect in case you have been tempted to save seed from any of the double-crossed hybrids. You can go back to the seed grower who is producing the double-crossed hybrid each and every year and be sure of getting good results.

Here's a pointer for the folks who have a supply of Kiefer pears you want to ripen to the best advantage. In our storage tests with Kiefer pears it was found that you could make a Kiefer pear very nearly as good as a Bartlett by ripening the fruit at 60 degrees. Several lots of Kiefer pears were stored last year at various temperatures, and as I just said it was found that 60 degrees was the best temperature. A funny thing the quality of the pears ripened at 70 degrees was just about what you would expect of a Kiefer pear while those that were ripened at 60 degrees were all right. The fruit that was kept at 50 degrees ripened more slowly than that at 60 and was not quite as good

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flavor although the flavor was better than that of the pears ripened at 70 degrees. Another point the pears ripened at 60 degrees made a much better canned product than those ripened at either higher or lower temperatures. I thought you folks who have Kiefer pears might be interested in the results of these experiments.

At this time of the year I am receiving inquiries as to the best method of storing small quantities of celery. Quite a few people have grown a row or two of celery in their gardens and they want to know the best way to store it. The finest quality celery is obtained by banking the rows with earth then covering the tops with leaves or straw held in place by means of boards to keep out the frost. Very few storage cellars are cool enough for the proper storage of celery. One method is to dig a trench about 15 inches deep and 12 inches wide in a well-drained place in the garden then lift the bunches of celery with considerable soil adhering to the roots and pack them in the trench, wetting the roots as you do so. After a few days and when the weather begins to get colder you cover the trench with boards and finally with straw and soil to keep out the cold. It is extremely important to have ventilation for the trench. One method is to set up a tile or a small box at one end then leave a small hole at the opposite end for the air to enter. Later, when the weather becomes severely cold both the ventilator and the air inlet should be blocked with straw or old bagging to keep out the frost.

You southern folks who are storing sweet potatoes should remember that careful handling and avoiding bruising the potatoes is the most important thing in the matter of having them keep. The next point of importance is to place the potatoes in a room where you can cure them with stove heat for about 10 days, the temperature in this curing room should be between 80 and 85 degrees with the windows and doors partly open for ventilation. This curing process heals the wounds and toughens the skins of the potatoes so that diseases cannot readily attack them. After the potatoes are cured the temperature should be lowered to about 50 degrees or as near that temperature as possible. Don't leave your sweets out in the rain or where they will get chilled after digging.